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AUTHOR Bartlett, V. L.
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ABSTRACT

Based on a statewide sample of teachers, subject masters, and administrators in Queensland, Australia, secondary state high schools, discussion focuses on the role of the subject master within the school system; the skills required for the position; and professional development activities. Changes relating to the administrative and curriculum functions of the role are identified, as are some collegial and bureaucratic approaches to professional development. (Author/MLF)

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THE SUBJECT-MASTER IN SECONDARY HIGH SCHOOLS - A MISSING LINK IN THE OPPORTUNITY CHAIN ?

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ABSTRACT

The Subject-Master in Secondary High Schools

- A Missing Link in the Opportunity Chain?

V. L. Bartlett.

This paper is concerned with the role of the subject master or its equivalent position in secondary state high schools throughout Australia. Discussion will focus on:

(1) the *role* of the subject master within the school system;

(2) the *skills and understandings* required of persons in the position;

(3) the *professional development activities* which ought to be conducted for persons entering or continuing in the role.

A statewide sample of the opinions of classroom teachers, subject masters and administrators in Queensland secondary state high schools has provided information about changes relating to the administrative and curriculum functions of the role. Administrative skills and understandings required for role enactment have been identified and these will be investigated further in the work session.

Finally some of the collegial and bureaucratic approaches to the professional development of subject masters will be discussed using the findings of this research.

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INTRODUCTION

Probably no other role within secondary high schools in Australia is less clearly defined than the role of subject-master. The position (referred to as subject-master, subject-coordinator, senior master....) is of recent origin and was established in schools during periods of rapid growth in student numbers. The need for the position in the school hierarchy evolved almost by spontaneous generation and the application of a kind of Parkinson's Law - work expands to fill all the available space (and time).

The process of development of the subject-master role is not unlike the missing link in the evolution and extinction of *Struthiomimus*, a small bipedal dinosaur.

In verse[1], it is suggested:

> *The Dinosaurs, or so we're told,*
> *Were far too imbecile to hold*
> *Their own against mammalian brains;*
> *Today not one of them remains.*
> *There is another school of thought*
> *Which says they suffered from a sort*
> *Of constipation from the loss*
> *Of adequate supplies of moss.*

The poem goes on to suggest several other theories one of which outlines the dinosaur's adaptive skill in reproducing by laying large eggs which were eaten by sagacious beasts. The verse concludes with the lines:

> *This story has a simple moral*
> *With which the wise will hardly quarrel;*
> *Remember that it scarcely ever*
> *Pays to be too bloody clever.*

I am suggesting that the position of subject-master evolved principally to facilitate school administration and to a lesser extent to provide some leadership in subject syllabus delineation; that like the dinosaur, the subject master has been required to adapt to diverse situations requiring diverse functions of the role; and that the 'clever act' of creating the position and the failure to rethink (with mammalian brainpower!) its purpose in the school organisation may produce the ultimate payoff of ineffective role enactment and the final 'extinction' of the role as it is known now.

I shall discuss these ideas using information from a research project currently in progress[2]. Before doing this, I would like to suggest in what ways the position of subject master is a "missing link in the opportunity chain". My reference is specifically to the Queensland situation but it is unlikely that the circumstances are radically different in education systems in other Australian states.

The Role of Subject Master

The position of subject master is the first classified promotional position in the opportunity chain leading to executive management in schools and education systems. In most states, the position represents the first opportunity for an upward mobile teacher to seek status, power and a position of prestige within his organisation. There is generally a fine grading of positions in the promotional hierarchy in each Australian state and the subject master/mistress position represents the first of these gradings. In Queensland it will become a relatively rare occurrence for a teacher in the state education system to avoid the sequence of promotion to subject master, deputy principal, principal, inspector etc. The regeneration process of filling administrative positions which currently operates does allow some teachers to avoid the rite of passage. More frequently rapid upward mobility is achieved by temporary occupancy of the position. Since there are a greater number of positions at the anchor end of the chain (the classroom interface), teachers are promoted through the position more rapidly than they are projected into positions higher up in the chain of command. There is therefore a greater probability of mobility in the role. In this sense, for many teachers, particularly in a period of rapid growth and expansion the position of subject master has been a "missing link".

Persons adopting the role of subject master have found their opportunities for upward mobility hindered by lack of role definition. There is evidence to suggest that currently this latter factor has led to downward mobility and a return of subject masters to fulltime classroom teaching[3]. There is something 'missing' in as much as there is inadequate definition of the role and the responsibilities which derive from the role.

These responsibilities appear to be three in number. Firstly a subject master/mistress is responsible for Group Maintenance or Consideration which

refers to behaviour indicative of friendship, trust, warmth and respect between a leader and his subordinates[4] (Halpin, 1966, p.86). It is not clear whether this function of maintaining self-esteem and job-satisfaction among members teaching in his subject area, is proper to the subject master's role, the deputy principal's or the principal's. It would seem that subject masters need to know the nature of such leadership and the role they have to play in group maintenance both in their own subject area and in the school organisation.

A second responsibility relates to the administrative and curriculum function of the role. Formal statements about the administrative and curriculum functions of the role are available for education systems in each state but these are abbreviated and narrow in definition. From Table 1 it can be seen that the role calls for a wide range of teaching and administrative skills. Informal statements about the role are probably more important than these formal list of duties issued by State Education Departments. At the present time, many functions are evolving informally and vary from one school to the next. Since these statements are 'missing' it is difficult to define the skills required of subject masters.

It is clear that administrative functions are required of the role (Table 1). It has been suggested that responsibilities be increased to include discipline within subjects, time-tabling etc. (Ogilvie, 1972). It is not clear however to what extent and how these administrative outputs are related to organisational output. To compound the problem, the administrative links between the deputy-principal (or principal) and the subject-masters is not clear. The position of subject master is remote in organisational space from the deputy and principal. Although the subject-master derives his authority from the principal (Appendix A) the degree of autonomy he may exercise in his capacity as administrator, is undefined. The statements indicate the peculiar mix of thought about the autonomy of the role. Apparently in three states (Queensland, N.S.W. and S.A.) the autonomy of the principal over the subject master/mistress is paramount. In W.A. the Director General has primary control. Tasmania opts out - perhaps the most viable solution in a time of rapid change in schools; whilst in Victoria, the subject master must look to the one person who knows the needs of the school, the principal! It is perhaps unfair to comment on these statements which are taken out of context and generally have been written upward of fifteen years ago. They are however the statements supplied to the author and do reflect perhaps the confused thinking about the role.

TABLE 1. FORMAL STATEMENTS OF DUTIES OF SUBJECT MASTERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

STATEMENT OF DUTIES	Q'LAND	VIC	N.S.W.	W.A.	TAS	S.A.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
1. demonstration lessons	X					
2. guidance - beginning teachers	X			X		X
3. supervision - student teachers						X
4. guidance teaching, method			X			X
ADMINISTRATION						
1. admin. tasks from principal	X	X	X		X	X
2. supervision of dept.	X		X		X	
3. conduct subject meetings		X				
4. develop subject rooms		X				
5. implementation school policy	X					
6. recruitment of teachers						X
7. resources maintenance	X					X
8. facilitate use of res.		X				
9. control finances.		X		X		
10. discipline of classes				X		
PROFESSIONAL - TEACHING						
1. co-ordination of curric.	X			X		
2. teach at no. levels		X				
3. remedial teach. in subj.	X					
4. teaching ability	X	X				
ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES						
5. syllabus delineation	X	X			X	
6. program planning	X		X		X	
7. conduct of examinations	X	X			X	
8. supervision of marking		X		X	X	

A final responsibility required of the role relates to development of curriculum within subjects. It is here that role enactment is incongruent with formal statements about the duties of the role. (Appendix A). The latter statements require curriculum duties related to group maintenance - the delineation of syllabuses, assessment, grading, supervision of marking - those aspects of a planned curriculum controlled by external authorities. The greatest change in the role is occurring in this area. The change reflects the rapid changes in schools in recent times and may account for the lack of redefinition of the role.

Curriculum development as opposed to maintenance in subject areas is now the responsibility of subject masters/mistresses. Curriculum development in the *school* is the responsibility of the principal. How these responsibilities are related is not clear. It is difficult to generalise about the nature of the role of subject master/mistress for all states. In some states, for example, N.S.W., the position is the first promotional link in the opportunity chain. In others, for example Queensland, it is possible to avoid sequent occupance. In this paper I am more concerned with the "missing link" aspect of the role which relates to the lack of definition of the nature of the role and the skills required in role enactment than with regeneration and mobility[6].

Statements about role enactment and skills required of subject masters/mistresses should logically derive from statements about role definition. Since the latter is unrefined, I have relied on the perceptions of teachers, subject masters/mistresses and administrators to construct statements about the skills and understandings required of the role. It is this latter aspect of the role that I shall discuss in the next section using the results of research on subject masters/mistresses in Queensland.

The Subject Master/Mistress in Queensland - An Historical Review.

Eight positions of subject master/mistress were introduced into Queensland high schools in 1964. These positions were unclassified and commanded a small allowance per fortnight. By 1970 the position was classified. By 1975 over half the number of subject masters/mistresses appointed had less than five years teaching experience. In May 1977, there were 830 persons in the role in Queensland state high schools.

During this time no investigation of the role had been attempted in Queensland although some comments had been made in studies related to the

role. Grassie (1974) noted the increased responsibility accorded to subject masters/mistresses and their reluctance to share that responsibility with teacher colleagues[7]. Fairbairn, McBride and Rigby (1976) noted that subject masters/mistresses undertook much of the administrator-class teacher contact in state high schools[8]. Neither of these conclusions were based on any in depth investiagtion of the role.

The Queensland Study.

Since the functions of subject masters/mistresses appeared to group into the two broad categories of administration and curriculum, these two aspects formed the focus for the present investigation. In October 1976, reality constructs were obtained by interviewing subject masters/mistresses and teachers. A number of their statements were recorded and these were added to other statements constructed from the authors' understanding of the curriculum process and administration theory. Two forms were developed and piloted with approximately fifty respondents. Items were deleted and/or rewritten. The intention was to use this written survey to identify issues which would be researched further using ethnographic techniques.

The data for discussion in this paper was obtained from part of one of the forms which focusses on the skills and understandings of subject masters/ mistresses. Data collection took place in March-June 1977 and is currently being processed and analysed.

Selection of schools was based on systematic random sampling methods[9]. A list of schools stratified by 'class' and by 'postcode within class' ensured adequate geographic coverage and proportionate representation of different classes of school. By this method of selection three hundred and ninety subject masters/mistresses, classroom teachers and administrators in twenty three schools were asked to complete the form. A sixty seven percent response rate although low was sufficient to ensure some level of generalisation and identification of significant skills and understandings.

Biographical information on the sample population is shown in Appendix D. A slight rewording of instructions permitted subgroups of subject masters, administrators and teachers to respond to the form. Responses attributed to subject masters/mistresses were perceptions of themselves in their role : the responses of the two other groups referred to perceptions of the role and

persons occupying the position within their school situation.

There were fewer male teachers and administrators. A small percentage of these people were principals and deputy principals. Significantly relatively few respondents who were teachers had made a formal study of education at a tertiary level.

The characteristics of subject masters/mistresses reflected their rapid growth in numbers in recent years. A high proportion were in the lower age groups, had taught for less than two years and held a university degree. A large number held Diplomas in Education (a university qualification) Significantly there were a greater number of subject masters/mistresses than teachers and administrators with a degree in education.

Data Analysis and Interpretation.

Responses to statements were on a five point Likert scale ranging from skills perceived to be of very great importance to skills perceived to be of no importance. Analysis of the data in this part of the research has been confined to simple frequency counts and calculation of means. This form of macro-analysis is fraught with the danger of overinterpretation but it does allow patterns of responses to be determined.

Before commenting on the data, a brief review of the formal statement of duties (Appendix B) of subject masters/mistresses in Queensland appears necessary. The list is more comprehensive than formal duty dists published in other states. The Queensland statement is notable for the following:

(1) statements about curriculum are highly prescriptive and refer to syllabus interpretation and implementation,
(2) there is little emphasis on Consideration or Group Maintenance,
(3) none of the duties require that the subject master/mistress be an 'expert' in his profession as a teacher,
(4) as in other statement of duties lists, more is implied than formally stated about the skills required of the role.

Inspection of Table 2 shows that apart from skills 1 and 14 (assisting inexperienced teachers and establishing adequate assessment proceedures) many of the skills suggested by the duties statement appear low in priority according to subject masters and mistresses (by rank ordering of skills).

These include skills relating to 15, 19, 33, 37, 41. Subject masters/mistresses consider that their role requires human relations skills and skills in teaching and curriculum in their subject area. They do not consider that they should be skilled in identifying organisational goals (25) or broader issues relating ot the school (30), (35), (37), (41). They appear adamant that they are not responsible for the direction (42) or supervision (43) of experienced teachers or for skills in conducting inservice or professional development activities (36), (40).

Table 3 suggests that subject masters/mistresses feel that they need to improve significantly in human relations skills (2), (4), (26), (44). It is significant that although they don't regard skills in inservice and professional development (PD) as important in their role they clearly indicate in Table 3 that they need to improve significantly in these skills (20), (29). The other pattern of responses in subject master's self perceptions of skills improvement relates to curriculum development in their subject. Respondents appear to be concerned with group maintenance (syllabus delineation, assessment, interpersonal relationship with teachers..) rather than task achievement (innovation, developing new courses...). Skills relating to the latter (Table 2, 23,26) are ranked near the median of the priority scale. In Table 3, they appear much higher on the priority scale. This is confirmed in the pattern of responses in Table 4.

One final comment about the subject master's/mistress's responses. Respondents appear to value skills related to effective use of time (10, Table 2). They consider they need to improve significantly in this area (18, Table 3) and regard it as a top priority in one of three skills which most need development (8, Table 4). This may reflect a concern for optimum management or performance in the role as it exists in today's high schools. It may also imply a desire for new and effective roles for subject masters/mistresses particularly in relation to curriculum. Administrators appear to be saying that subject masters/mistresses should possess skills relating to group maintenance, personal relationship with teachers and subject delineation especially in relation to assessment moderation, etc... They give relatively low priority to the skills of innovation and course development but suggest that subject masters are deficient in these skills (Table 3). Table 4 indicates that these skills are unranked in priority for development.

There is a relatively greater emphasis placed on those subject masters'

TABLE 2 MEAN SCORES - SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS REQUIRED IN SUBJECT MASTERS.

SKILL OR UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL SAMPLE POP N = 260		S.M.'s * N = 108		ADMINS.** N = 40		TEACHERS*** N = 112	
	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK
1. assist inexperienced teachers	4.56	1	4.54	1	4.80	1	4.52	3
2. realistic acceptable goals	4.52	2	4.40	3	4.68	2	4.57	1
3. knowledge subject matter	4.43	3	4.33	5	4.48	8	4.48	4
4. awareness - resources	4.40	4	4.27	6	4.30	11	4.54	2
5. dev. co-operative approach	4.32	5	4.24	8	4.55	6	4.29	6
6. interpersonal relats:teachers	4.31	6	4.34	4	4.57	4	4.20	8
7. evaluate own performance	4.23	7	4.23	9	4.23	17	4.23	7
8. teaching	4.21	8	4.17	11	4.40	9	4.14	9
9. motivate teachers goals	4.20	9	4.18	10	4.55	6	4.06	12.5
10. allocate time effectively	4.17	10	4.41	2	4.25	14.5	3.94	18
11. use teachers skills to adv.	4.15	11	4.10	13	4.33	10	4.12	10.5
12. guide teachers	4.12	13	4.04	15	4.55	6	4.03	14.5
13. co-ordinate work:teachers	4.12	13	4.06	14	4.27	13	4.12	10.5
14. estab. assessment proceedure	4.12	13	4.25	7	4.58	3	4.30	5
15. write work programs	4.05	15	4.00	16	4.23	17	4.03	14.5
16. patience, tolerance	4.02	16	4.14	12	3.95	28	3.95	17
17. handling conflict	3.98	17	3.96	18	4.15	21	3.93	19.5
18. verbal communication	3.95	18.5	3.85	24	4.00	25.5	3.97	16
19. management of resources	3.95	18.5	3.96	18	4.00	25.5	3.93	19.5
20. needs of individ. studs.	3.94	20	3.96	18	4.23	17	3.81	26
21. moderation process	3.91	21	3.76	29	4.00	19.5	3.90	22
22. interpersonal relats:adms.	3.90	22	3.89	21.5	4.28	12	3.77	28
23. innovation	3.89	23	3.79	27.5	3.70	36	4.06	12.5
24. listening	3.88	24.5	3.83	25	4.20	19.5	3.80	27
25. identifying school goals	3.88	24.5	3.89	21.5	4.05	22.5	3.82	25

* Subject Masters' estimate of essential skills in the role.
** Administrators' estimate of essential skills in the role.
*** Teachers' estimate of essential skills in the role.

TABLE 2 (Cont.)

SKILL OR UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL SAMPLE POP N = 260		S.M.'s N = 108		ADMINS. N = 40		TEACHERS N = 112	
	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK	$\bar{X}$	RANK
26. develop new courses	3.85	26	3.87	23	3.65	39	3.92	21
27. promote stud. involv.	3.84	27	3.82	26	3.88	29	3.83	23.5
28. delegate responsibility	3.82	28	3.92	20	4.00	25.5	3.67	29
29. interpersonal relats:studs	3.72	29	3.79	27.5	4.05	22.5	3.54	34
30. sensitivity to change	3.71	30	3.62	32.5	3.63	40	3.83	23.5
31. stud. behaviour problems	3.67	31	3.71	30	3.85	30.5	3.60	32
32. use problem solving	3.65	32	3.63	32.5	3.75	35.5	3.61	31
33. run effective meetings	3.64	33	3.65	31	3.85	30.5	3.58	33
34. counselling students	3.58	34.5	3.52	35	3.83	32.5	3.50	35
35. constant values	3.58	34.5	3.52	35	3.58	41	3.65	30
36. inservice education	3.57	36	3.49	37	4.00	25.5	3.50	36
37. follow procedures:princip.	3.55	37	3.52	35	4.25	14.5	3.32	38
38. handling finances	3.48	38	3.48	38	3.43	43	3.46	37
39. instruct teachers	3.40	39	3.40	40	3.83	32.5	3.22	40
40. promote professional devt.	3.39	40	3.42	39	3.75	35.5	3.24	39
41. assist school adms.	3.34	41	3.32	41	3.80	34	3.18	41
42. direct teachers	3.10	42	3.15	43	3.53	42	2.87	42
43. supervise teachers	3.06	43	3.16	42	3.68	38	2.72	44
44. assist experienced teachers	2.88	44	2.85	45	3.23	44	2.75	43
45. filing and clerical	2.83	45	2.96	44	2.98	45	2.60	45

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF RESPONSES AND RANK ORDER FOR SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

SKILL OR UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL POPULATION			S.M. *			ADM. **			TEACHERS ***		
	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK
1. realistic acceptable goals	42	16.2	19	20	20.8	19	4	10.0	26.5	18	16.1	19
2. motivate teachers - goals	76	29.2	1	41	42.7	1	6	15.0	17.5	29	25.9	6
3. identify school goals	38	14.6	6	13	13.5	32.5	5	12.5	22	20	17.9	17.5
4. dev. co-operative approach	64	24.6	8	29	30.2	8	10	25.0	3.5	25	22.3	9.5
5. instruct teachers	41	15.8	20	15	15.6	27	4	10.0	26.5	22	19.6	13.5
6. guide teachers	52	20.0	16	17	17.7	24.5	8	20.0	10.5	27	24.1	7.5
7. use teachers skills to adv.	63	24.2	9	22	22.9	15.5	9	22.5	7	32	28.6	3
8. promote professional dev.	56	21.5	12	25	26.0	13	10	25.0	3.5	21	18.8	15.5
9. assist experienced teachers	23	8.9	40	9	9.4	39	4	10.0	26.5	10	8.9	35.5
10. assist inexperienced teachers	72	27.7	2	27	28.1	10	10	22.5	7	36	32.1	1
11. assist school adms.	26	10.0	34	8	8.3	41.5	5	12.5	22	13	11.6	30
12. direct teachers	29	11.2	32	9	9.4	39	3	7.5	33.5	17	15.2	20.5
13. supervise teachers	39	15.0	21	17	17.1	24.5	7	17.5	14	15	13.4	23
14. run effective meetings	59	22.7	11	22	22.9	15.5	7	17.5	14	30	26.8	5
15. write work programs	37	14.2	25	20	20.8	19	2	5.0	40.5	15	13.4	23
16. estab. assess. proced.	39	15.0	21	16	26.7	26	2	5.0	40.5	21	18.8	15.5
17. delegate responsibility	55	21.2	13	26	27.1	11.5	9	22.5	7	20	17.9	17.5
18. allocate time effectively	66	25.4	5	39	40.1	2	3	7.5	33.5	24	21.4	11
19. innovation	71	27.3	3	29	30.2	8	10	25.0	3.5	32	28.6	3
20. promote profess. devt.	49	18.9	17	30	31.3	6	5	12.5	22	14	12.5	26.5
21. counselling students	26	10.0	34	11	11.5	36	5	12.5	22	9	8.0	39.5
22. filing and clerical	30	11.5	30	14	14.6	29.5	2	5.0	40.5	14	12.5	26.5
23. interpersonal relats:studs.	24	9.2	38	9	9.4	39	3	7.5	33.5	12	10.7	32.5

* Subject Masters' estimate of skills improvement on present-absent scale.

** Administrators' estimate of skills subject master needs to improve significantly.

*** Teachers' estimate of skills subject master needs to improve significantly.

TABLE 3 (Cont.)

SKILL OR UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL POPULATION			S.M.			ADM.			TEACHERS		
	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK	N	%N	RANK
24. interpersonal relats:teachers	54	20.8	14	21	21.9	17	10	25.0	3.5	23	20.5	12
25. interpersonal relats:adms	30	11.5	30	14	14.6	29.5	8	20.0	10.5	8	7.1	42.5
26. co-ordinate work teachers	67	25.8	4	29	30.2	8	6	15.0	17.5	32	28.6	3
27. verbal communication	30	11.5	30	19	19.8	22	3	7.5	33.5	8	7.1	42.5
28. teaching	21	8.1	42	10	10.4	37	1	2.5	43.5	10	8.9	35.5
29. inservice education	66	25.4	5	38	39.6	3	11	27.5	1	17	15.2	20.5
30. knowledge subject matter	26	10.0	34	13	13.5	82.5	1	2.5	43.5	12	10.7	32.5
31. awareness-resources	60	23.1	10	31	32.3	5	3	7.5	33.5	27	24.1	7.5
32. sensitivity to change	29	11.2	32	12	12.5	34.5	3	7.5	33.5	14	12.5	26.5
33. constant values	8	3.1	45	4	4.2	44	0	0.0	45	4	3.6	45
34. patience and tolerance	26	10.0	34	14	14.6	29.5	3	7.5	33.5	9	8.0	39.5
35. needs of individ. studs.	31	11.9	28	14	14.6	29.5	4	10.0	26.5	13	11.6	30
36. evaluate own perform.	53	20.4	15	23	23.9	14	8	20.0	10.5	22	19.6	13.5
37. develop new courses	65	25.0	7	33	34.4	4	7	17.5	14	25	22.3	9.5
38. handling finances	15	5.8	44	5	5.2	43	3	7.5	33.5	7	6.3	44
39. moderation process	23	8.9	40	8	8.3	41.5	2	5.0	40.5	13	11.6	30
40. stud. behaviour prob.	39	15.0	21	19	19.8	22	6	15.0	17.5	14	12.5	26.5
41. management of resources	34	13.1	26	19	19.8	22	5	12.5	22	10	8.9	35.5
42. listening skills	24	9.2	38	12	12.5	34.5	3	7.5	33.5	9	8.0	39.5
43. use problem solving	33	12.7	27	20	20.8	19	3	7.5	33.5	10	8.9	35.5
44. handling conflict	49	18.9	17	26	27.1	4.5	8	20.0	10.5	15	13.4	23
45. follow procedures;princip.	18	6.9	43	3	3.1	45	6	15.0	17.5	9	8.0	39.5

%N = Number of responses for the skill compared to the number of possible responses in each sub-group population.

TABLE 4 RANK ORDER RESPONSES - THREE SPECIFIC SKILLS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

SKILL OR UNDERSTANDING	TOTAL POP N=260		S.M.'s N=96		ADM. N=40		TEACHERS N=112	
	RESP.	RANK	RESP.	RANK	RESP.	RANK	RESP.	RANK
1. develop co-operative approach	48	1	16	4.5	11	2	19	1
2. motivate teachers - goals	47	2	22	1.5	8	3.5	14	6.5
3. assist inexperienced teachers	42	3	16	4.5	8	3.5	16	5
4. interpersonal relats - teachers	38	4	11	8.5	12	1	13	8.5
5. realistic and acceptable goals	32	5	12	7.5	6	5	14	6.5
6. ability to innovate	31	6	11	8.5	-	-	17	3.5
7. develop new courses	31	7	17	3	-	-	11	11
8. allocate time effectively	30	8	22	1.5	-	-	4	26
9. estab. assest. procedures	28	9	-	-	5	6.5	13	8.5
10. use teacher skills to advantage	27	10	8	11	-	-	18	2
11. co-ordinate work of teachers	27	11	7	13	-	-	17	3.5
12. prov. inservice education	24	12	12	7	4	9.5	6	19.5
13. write work programs	21	13	8	11	-	-	10	12.5
14. promote stud. involvement	20	14	12	7	-	-	8	14.5
15. knowledge subject matter	20	15	-	-	-	-	12	10
16. guide teachers	19	16	6	15.5	4	9.5	8	14.5
17. awareness of resources	16	17	6	15.5	-	-	10	12.5
18. promote professional devt.	16	18	8	11	3	13.5	-	-
19. supervise teachers	15	19	5	19	3	13.5	7	17
20. student behav. probs.	14	20	5	19	5	6.5	-	-
21. delegate responsibility	13	21	6	15.5	-	-	5	22.5
22. interpersonal relats. - adms.	13	22	-		4	9.5	-	-
23. eval. own performance	12	23	6	15.5	-	-	-	-
24. instruct teachers	12	24	-		-	-	4	26.5
25. manage resources	11	25	5	19	-	-	-	-

skills which affect themselves as administrators (22, 37, Table 2). They appear to think subject masters/mistresses need to improve skills referring to interpersonal relationships and following procedures of administrators (25,45, Table 3). Table 4 indicates that there may be other skills which are relatively more important althought the skill of relating to administrators (22) ranks relatively high.

Teachers' perceptions of skills required in the role are more congruent with the perceptions of subject masters/mistresses than with administrators (Table 2). They appear to want subject masters to motivate them to achieve goals (2), to guide them (6) to use their (teachers') skills to best advantage (7), to coordinate their work (26) and to develop good interpersonal relationships with them (24). They also regard innovation and development of courses very highly in a subject master's repertoire of skills. Significantly all of these skills are ranked very high on the priority list for improvement (Table 3). This is confirmed in their responses to three essential skills for improvement (Table 4).

There is a high positive statistical rank order correlation among groups for skills and understandings (Table 5) and for the percent responses for skills which need to be improved significantly (Table 6). Responses of administrators tend to be higher on the Likert scale with less agreement in rank order with the order supplied by subject masters and teachers. Least agreement occurs between classroom teachers and administrators. (τ = 0.60 and 0.36) Many inferences might be drawn from the data. Further investigation of the issues isolated in the preceding analysis is required.

The Professional Development of Skills and Understandings of Subject Masters/Mistresses

The three groups of respondents were asked to indicate (on a five point Likert scale) the importance of various agencies in the professional development (PD) of three specific skills. The mean scores for the responses of each subgroup are very similar in rank order (Table 7). There is a clear indication that employer or employee initiated school focused activities are considered to be the most adequate means of PD.

Collegial forms of activity (1), (4), (6), (5), (9), (11) are preferred over bureaucratic and institutionalised forms of learning and development of skills. The reasons for these patterns of responses are not known at

TABLE 7 MEAN SCORES FOR RESPONSES TO AGENCIES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	Total pop'n. N=220*	S.M. N=88	Adm N=36	Teachers N=96
1. experience in the school situation	3.86^{1}	3.80^{1}	4.10^{2}	$3\ 83^{1}$
2. courses at universities	2.23^{12}	2.26^{12}	2.28^{12}	2.16^{12}
3. tertiary institutions: other	2.42^{10}	2.57^{8}	2.38^{11}	2.56^{8}
4. departmental inservice	3.50^{3}	3.58^{3}	3.57^{4}	3.42^{3}
5. professional associations	2.93^{5}	2.97^{4}	3.10^{6}	2.88^{5}
6. interaction with other SM's	3.75^{2}	3.79^{2}	4.15^{1}	3.56^{2}
7. study of adm. in other organizations	2.61^{7}	2.71^{7}	2.92^{7}	2.38^{10}
8. involvement-moderation meetings	2.48^{9}	2.35^{10}	2.78^{9}	2.57^{7}
9. visiting other schools	3.14^{4}	2.96^{5}	3.39^{5}	3.16^{4}
10. involvement in other organizations	2.35^{11}	2.28^{11}	2.52^{10}	2.25^{11}
11. guidance of superiors within schools	2.91^{6}	2.75^{6}	3.62^{3}	2.73^{6}
12. guidance of superiors outside schools	2.57^{8}	2.52^{9}	2.80^{8}	2.51^{9}

* Superscript on numbers represents rank order for each sample population.

TABLE 5 KENDALL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR MEAN SCORES FOR SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS.

	Total Pop'n	S.M.	ADM.	Teachers
Total Pop'n	1.00	0.89	0.69	0.87
S.M.		1.00	0.70	0.79
ADM.			1.00	0.60
Teachers				1.00

Significant at the 0.001 level (one tail test)

TABLE 6 KENDALL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR PERCENT RESPONSES FOR SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS.

	Total Pop'n	S.M.	ADM.	Teachers
Total Pop'n	1.00	0.79	0.51	0.65
S.M.		1.00	0.40	0.46
ADM.			1.00	0.36
Teachers				1.00

Significant at the 0.001 level (one tail test)

this stage of the investigation. Teachers and subject masters/mistresses appear to be suggesting however that activity should focus on schools where they can become involved in decisions about their PD; that development of skills in subject masters/mistresses should occur where the skills are exercised; that programs of teacher development in external institutions may be irrelevant; and that subject masters themselves should adopt an active rather than passive role in the development of skills.

There may be a number of problems with implementation of collegial forms *only* and the total disregard for bureaucracies in the professional development of subject masters. This may be illustrated by asking a number of questions:

(1) How does the PD of subject masters differ from the PD of other roles (teachers, deputy principals) and should this be a factor in the decision as to who provides the input?

(2) How are school based programs to be implemented and by whom?

(3) What kind of behaviour modification will occur? Will it be the most effective if it is generated from within the system? How long will it last?

(4) Will collegial PD in the school setting reinforce undesirable practice and create a gene pool of hybridised thought about new roles for subject masters, teachers....?

(5) How will subject masters come to a better knowledge of skills exercised in other education systems and an understanding of the value and rationale for the development of certain skills?

These and similar questions should be considered before attempts are made to provide meaningful professional development programs for newly appointed and experienced subject masters/mistresses.

Conclusion

The role of subject master/mistress is a 'missing link' not only because it may form part of the promotional opportunity chain but because our understanding of the role is for schools in yesterday's society. Formal statements about the role in each of the state education systems possibly reflect our failure to redefine its true purpose. In this sense subject masters/mistresses are not merely 'middle men' but 'missing links' in the school system.

The Queensland study focussing on skills and understandings suggests that subject masters/mistresses have been quick to recognise they have new roles to play as curriculum developers in schools where greater emphasis is placed on the learner rather than the teacher. Administrators tend to emphasise the administrative function of the role especially in those aspects which are supportive of their own administration. It may well be that the role as it is known at present should become 'extinct' so that two types of persons may become visible, one supporting the administrative function and the second maintaining and developing curriculum in subjects or subject areas (humanities, science...). *Subject master/mistress* appears to be a title proper to the latter function which need not be locked into any opportunity chain but could be a professional position commanding the prestige of executive positions in schools.

Finally, the present study suggests that administrators should rethink their notions about past and present attempts at professional development of persons in the role of subject master/mistress. In the Queensland situation there have been a limited number of induction and professional development courses but these have been isolated, limited in intent, with an overemphasis on resources management, how to do it techniques (apparently without any rationale or theoretical understanding) and without continuing support for incumbents who enter into or continue in the role.

Nor is it sufficient to engage in needs assessment exercises. Despite the emphasis proponents of this model place on participation, it falls short of truly participatory models of professional development which allow subjects to review their role, devise programs of change, implement the change and monitor the change within a recurrent form of education. Administrators and advocates of inservice education have tended to impose PD in a prescriptive and authoritarian manner. Subject masters/mistresses apparently reject this by indicating a preference for collegial approaches to PD. These approaches are worthy of closer scrutiny by persons making decisions about the processes most adequate for professional development of subject masters/mistresses.

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APPENDIX A

Formal statements of duties of subject masters in education departments by states.

QUEENSLAND	"Subject masters shall, *subject to the direction of the Principal*, be responsible for: (official statement of duties, 1964)
NEW SOUTH WALES	"The subject master (is) *responsible to the Principal* for the programme of work in his subject and co-ordination of work in various classes" (Assistant Director-General, 1977)
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	"it is to be borne in mind that the authority of the *head of the school is paramount, over-ruling the powers of Senior Masters and Mistresses* in all matters pertaining to the school and its work". (Ed. Circular, No. 37)
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	"A senior master or senior mistress of a school is responsible for the control and conduct of such activities of the school *as are recommended from time to time by the Director of Secondary Education*". (Regulation 186, 1961)
TASMANIA	"There is no statement of duties available. This permits flexibility of organisation in schools and *preserves the autonomy of principals* in developing educational programmes tailored to individual school needs". (Deputy Director, 1977)
VICTORIA	"The following comments on the duties of the *subject co-ordinator* are suggestions as to what is involved in this office and must be considered in the light of the *needs of the school, as known by the head master*". (Education Gazette, 1962)

APPENDIX B

QUEENSLAND SUBJECT MASTERS/MISTRESSES - DUTIES.

Subject Masters/Mistresses shall, subject to the direction of the Principal, be responsible for:

1. Delineation of the subject syllabus with special attention to grading and progression.

2. Planning of programs for year and term.

3. Arrangement of subject discussions and demonstrations.

4. General guidance of teachers of the subject with particular attention to young teachers. Giving advice on teaching methods.

5. Enrichment or other modification of the subject prescription to suit student groups.

6. Conduct of examinations in the subject.

7. Ordering and maintenance of text books, reference books and equipment.

8. Direction of remedial work in the subject. It is considered desirable that a subject master/mistress should be time-tabled for a maximum of 20 periods per week. However it should be realised that it may be some time before the staffing situation will admit of this. At the same time, it is important that the best use be made of a subject master's teaching ability.

   His expertise should be used for the benefit of students in the classroom, and for the benefit of teachers through demonstration lessons.

9. Responsibility, as required by the Principal, for the supervision of all matters concerning his department, including the implementation of school policy in such matters as written work, practical work and the like.

APPENDIX C

What skills and understandings do you consider are essential to a teacher who assumes the role of subject master/mistress?

Please rate the following items in Column A, according to the following scale:

5 of very great importance
4 of great importance
3 of moderate importance
2 of minor importance
1 of no importance

Please add additional items if you consider this necessary.

1. the ability to have realistic and acceptable goals identified in specific subject areas. ( )
2. the ability to motivate teachers to achieve those goals ( )
3. the ability to assist in the identification of realistic and acceptable school goals. ( )
4. the ability to develop a co-operative approach to teaching and learning within his/her subject area. ( )
5. the ability to instruct teachers. ( )
6. the ability to guide teachers. ( )
7. the ability to have the special skills of individual teachers used to best advantage ( )
8. the ability to promote the professional development of teachers. ( )
9. the ability to assist experienced teachers. ( )
10. the ability to assist inexperienced teachers. ( )
11. the ability to assist school administrators. ( )
12. the ability to direct teachers. ( )
13. the ability to supervise teachers adequately. ( )
14. the ability to run effective meetings. ( )
15. the ability to write work programmes. ( )
16. the ability to establish adequate assessment procedures. ( )
17. the ability to delegate responsibility. ( )
18. the ability to allocate his/her time effectively. ( )
19. the ability to innovate. ( )
20. skill in promoting student involvement. ( )
21. skill in counselling students in specific subject areas. ( )
22. skill in filing and clerical work. ( )
23. skill in interpersonal relations with students. ( )
24. skill in interpersonal relations with teachers. ( )
25. skill in interpersonal relations with administrators. ( )

26. skill in co-ordinating the work of teachers. ( )
27. skill in verbal communication. ( )
28. skill in teaching. ( )
29. skill in providing inservice education experiences. ( )
30. knowledge of subject matter. ( )
31. awareness of availability of resource materials. ( )
32. sensitivity to changing societal values. ( )
33. awareness of constant values. ( )
34. patience and tolerance. ( )
35. understanding the needs of individual students. ( )
36. ability to evaluate his/her own performance as a subject master/mistress. ( )
37. skill in developing new courses in his/her subject. ( )
38. skill in handling finances available for his/her subject. ( )
39. skill in the moderation process. ( )
40. skill in handling student behaviour problems. ( )
41. skill in the management of resources. ( )
42. listening skills. ( )
43. the ability to use problem-solving strategies. ( )
44. skill in handling conflict. ( )
45. the ability to follow school procedures as ourlined by the principal. ( )

Other Skills

_____

_____

_____

_____

List below the three specific skills or understandings from the above list that you consider are the most important for a subject master/mistress to develop or improve in his/her present role.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How would you hope he/she would develop these greater skills or understandings?

Please rate the following items according to the following scale:

5 of very great importance
4 of great importance
3 of moderate importance
2 of minor importance
1 of no importance

		Skill or understanding			Mean Score
		1	2	3	
a)	by experience in the school situation.	( )	( )	( )	( )
b)	by courses at universities.	( )	( )	( )	( )
c)	by courses at tertiary institutions other than universities.	( )	( )	( )	( )
d)	by departmental in-service programmes.	( )	( )	( )	( )
e)	by involvement in professional associations.	( )	( )	( )	( )
f)	by interaction with other subject masters/mistresses.	( )	( )	( )	( )
g)	by the study of administration in organizations other than schools.	( )	( )	( )	( )
h)	involvement at moderation meetings	( )	( )	( )	( )
i)	by visiting other schools regularly.	( )	( )	( )	( )
j)	by involvement in organizations other than schools (e.g. social, service, cultural).	( )	( )	( )	( )
k)	by the guidance of superiors within the school.	( )	( )	( )	( )
l)	by the guidance of superiors outside the school.	( )	( )	( )	( )

RECOMMENDATIONS.

What professional development activities should be organised for subject masters?

ACTIVITIES	WHERE? *	HOW OFTEN	BEST PERSON OR ORGANISATION TO CONDUCT ACTIVITIES

* For example, school based, tertiary institutions, whole school withdrawal,...

APPENDIX D

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FOR SAMPLE POPULATION

	Sex		Age in years					Teaching experience				Teaching Qualification			Completion of first degree		No. completed B.Ed.
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	>51	<10	11-20	>21	None	Dip.Ed.	Dip.T. Certif	Yes	No	
Total Population	105	152	62	72	39	35	34	18	161	72	27	21	73	160	165	91	27
Subject Masters	25	71	14	31	14	14	20	3	58	36	2	5	34	54	75	21	11
Administrators	13	27	1	7	11	11	5	6	10	23	18	3	10	27	33	7	7
Teachers	63	49	47	34	4	10	9	9	93	13	7	12	28	72	54	57	8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Skills and Understanding

What administrative skills and understandings are required of subject masters/mistresses?

Should the skills of subject masters/mistresses be related primarily to administrative practice or teaching?

Should subject masters/mistresses exhibit skills in curriculum development?

How can subject masters/mistresses relate their subject activities to organizational output? What specific skills are required?

Is there a "core" group of skills common to all positions in a school system? What skills comprise this group?

Do the skills and understandings required of subject masters/mistresses differ significantly in kind from those skills required of deputy or assistant principals?

What skills should be used as criteria for the selection of subject masters/mistresses?

How important is human relations training in developing effective subject masters/mistresses?

Professional Development

What kinds of professional development activities should be implemented for subject masters/mistresses in each of the state education systems?

Who should initiate and provide professional development for subject masters/mistresses?

To what extent should these developmental activities be planned for immediate or remote goals of professionalisation?

How do vacancies and mobility of persons in the position of subject master/mistress inhibit professional development?

Should a status similar to those which generate prestige associated with the role of principal or deputy principal in a school be ascribed to the subject master's/mistress's role?

What contribution have tertiary establishments to offer in the professional development of subject masters/mistresses?

Of what benefit are specific inservice programs such as whole school withdrawal, school based inservice, out-reach.....to the professional development of subject masters/mistresses?

Role Definition and Enactment

Ought the role of subject master/mistress be located within promotional opportunity chains in the school or education bureaucracy?

What is the purpose of the role of subject master/mistress in secondary state high schools?

Should the leadership role of the subject master/mistress be exercised primarily in curriculum development or in administration of his subject?

Should expert professional teachers be promoted to the status of subject master/mistress?

What professional qualifications should a subject master/mistress have?

How can subject masters/mistresses effectively serve teacher needs?

How can the emphasis be related to the development of the school client, the pupil?

How *can* subject masters/mistresses effectively actualize school potential?

Who should select persons for the role, the school or upper management in the education bureaucracy?

To what extent is the subject master/mistress development of the *school* responsible for *curriculum*?

What changes would improve the contribution of subject masters/mistresses to the effectiveness of secondary high schools?

Why are subject masters/mistresses not appointed to primary schools?

Should a position which specifically fulfils the administrative function of the subject master's/mistress's role, be created in the school system?

What is the extent of the subject master's/mistress's power to fragment the *school* curriculum (by the development of a solid power base for his specific subject discipline)?

What are the criteria for selection of subject masters/mistresses?